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STANDARD DHIA

A plan for every size herd

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AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH SERVICE, U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Dairy-Herd-Improvement Letter

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REPORT OF THE FIRST MEETING OF THE NATIONAL DHIA COORDINATING GROUP

The first meeting of the National DHIA Coordinating Group was held in Washington, D. C., February 23-24, 1966. All thirteen representatives were in attendance.

The broad objectives of the Coordinating Group are to bring about more complete and effective integration of the operational and administrative aspects of the National Cooperative Dairy Herd Improvement Program at the National, Regional, State, and County levels. The Group provides direct representation to segments of the dairy industry that depend heavily upon the use of the data produced. In addition, it provides a strong base for the formulation of policy, rules, and regulations and for administering their effective coordination and application to the DHIA Program.

Much of the first meeting was devoted to the subject of how the Coordinating Group can best act in strengthening DHIA. The deliberations included discussions of such matters as: (1) defining the functions of the Coordinating Group and its relationship to other interested organizations; (2) outlining its operational procedure; and (3) re-evaluating the existing Memorandum of Understanding that outlines the individual responsibilities of the Federal Extension Service, the Agricultural Research Service, and the State Extension Services, including County Agricultural Agents, and local associations. The desirability of strengthening 18 active State DHIA Associations, the recently formed National DHIA, Inc., and the need for more statewide associations were noted. Some of

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these organizations are or can effectively serve in promoting the uniform enforcement of rules and in conducting business-oriented service activities.

The Coordinating Group discussed ways to make critically needed research results available on the adequacies of existing and new weighing and sampling devices. The Group agreed to establish a technical subgroup composed of research and dairy extension personnel to develop interest and obtain research results in this important area. The technical subgroup will report their findings and recommendations to the Coordinating Group for evaluation.

In recognizing the need for greater uniformity in the use and enforcement of DHIA rules, the Coordinating Group requested the Dairy Records Committee of the American Dairy Science Association to thoroughly review the existing DHIA rules. The ultimate need is for standards that are practical, realistic, and enforceable under modern production systems and that will provide authentic, accurate production records and services the industry needs. The Dairy Records Committee will report their findings and recommendations to the Coordinating Group.

Steps were taken that should lead to redefining the responsibilities of cooperating agencies and groups involved in the overall conduct of dairy recordkeeping programs. The chairmen of the four regional extension subgroups were asked to work with their respective extension dairymen, extension directors, and State and local associations, to determine what is expected of local and State organizations in the conduct of DHIA recordkeeping. Attention will be given to the roles involved in promotion, rule enforcement, business activity, personnel management, educational activities, and other related areas of work. The recommendations of the four regional subgroup chairmen, each of whom is a member of the Coordinating Group, will be consolidated into a single recommendation and reported to the Coordinating Group at a future meeting.

The responsibility and authority that the Coordinating Group may assume was outlined and discussed, largely in terms of coordination, evaluation, leadership, and influence. It was felt that the influence of the Coordinating Group could be used effectively to bring about improvements in the troublesome areas as rule enforcement at local levels so that direct enforcement action by individual Extension Specialist

would not be necessary. It was the hope of the Group that improvement could be effectively accomplished through broad industry support and representation in the Coordinating Group and through the Group's effort in systematically and thoroughly evaluating problem areas such as weighing and sampling devices and the establishment and enforcement of rules. The Coordinating Group will call upon competent individuals and technical subgroups for assistance in the future.

In its first meeting, the Coordinating Group recognized that DHIA is and has been a strong and effective recordkeeping program. This belief is supported by the following facts: (1) Participation in DHIA has doubled since 1954 and currently approaches three million cows; (2) almost 19 percent of all milking cows are enrolled in the three plans of recordkeeping; (3) cows on Standard DHIA exceed all dairy cows in milk yield by more than 4,200 pounds per cow annually; (4) the records available for research and sire evaluation have tripled since 1954 and numbered 1.75 million in 1965; (5) approximately 38 percent of all cows enrolled on Standard DHIA are registered in breed society herd books; (6) the sire evaluation work done by the U.S. Department of Agriculture is on a systematic, complete, and up-to-date basis and provides the industry with the basic tools necessary for genetic progress in production traits; (7) the cow evaluation program started in 1964 by the U.S. Department of Agriculture should accelerate the rate of genetic gain; and (8) the National DHIA farmers organization was first formed in 1965.

The next meeting for the National DHIA Coordinating Group was set for May 16-17, 1966, in Washington, D. C.

Members in attendance at the first meeting were:

L. H. Davis (Chairman) Administrator, Federal Extension Service, USDA

E. L. Corley (Secretary) Chief, Dairy Cattle Research Branch, ARS, USDA

F. H. Baker, Coordinator, Animal Science Program, FES, USDA
John J. Barnard, Dairy Extension Specialist, Utah State University

Craig Beane, President, National DHIA, Inc.

Charles E. Bell, Director, Division of Agricultural Science, Technology and Management, FES (Assisted L. H. Davis)

- H. C. Gilmore, Dairy Extension Specialist, Pennsylvania State University
G. W. Harpestad, Dairy Extension Specialist, University of Illinois
H. A. Herman, Executive Secretary, National Association of Animal Breeders
R. E. Hodgson, Director, Animal Husbandry Research Division, ARS, USDA
S. W. Hoitt, Director, Extension Service, University of New Hampshire
D. N. Putnam, Dairy Extension Specialist, Pennsylvania State University
R. H. Rumler, Executive Secretary, Holstein-Friesian Association
M. E. Senger, Dairy Extension Specialist, North Carolina State University

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